SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, I am just coming to the next part. Sir, 27 newly proposed zones have already been approved. Sir, if the hon. Member wants the details of the States, I would be happy to supply the same.

Visit of Afghan President to India

*323. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:†

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Afghanistan President during his visit to India has impressed upon India that he would take up the issue about Indian goods being able to enter Afghanistan through Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether the two agreements were signed between India and Afghanistan;

(c) if so, to what extent these agreements would be helpful for both the countries;

(d) whether Indian Airlines would begin flying the Delhi-Kabul sector from March 27; and

(e) what are the other assistance that would be provided to Afghanistan by India during 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (e) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Afghan Government has conveyed that transit access for Indian goods, and in particular for those under India's assistance programmes, would facilitate in strengthening Afghanistan's reconstruction effort. Afghan leaders have also indicated that they would pursue the issue of transit for Indian goods with the Government of Pakistan.

(b) and (c) Two MOUs were signed during the visit of President Karzai. The MOU on Cooperation in the field of media and information calls for greater interaction between media persons and radio and TV organization of the two countries. The MOU on Cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation is aimed at building capacity and strengthening institutional structure of Afghan civil aviation sector.

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

(d) Indian Airlines would commence its operations to/from Kabul with effect from 31 March, 2005.

(e) India has committed US $ 500 million over the period 2002-2008 for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. India has undertaken, in partnership with the Afghan Government, projects in a wide range of sectors, including power, road construction, agriculture, industry, telecommunications, information & broadcasting, health and education.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy is again ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can you raise some objection about it?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, for maximum number of questions, there should be an award. As there is an award for the best parliamentarian, some weightage should be there for putting maximum number of questions.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I would like ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, if you put the question, the recommendations mady by Shri Nilotpal Basu will be taken back ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I would like to know that during the visit of Afghanistan President to India, his sole inclination was that we would make all efforts to see that the goods are transported to Afghanistan through the territory of Pakistan, which will be of a great benefit for Afghanistan. India also was very much interested. So, I would like to know what is its stage, and, when should we expect this, and, is there any emphasis on this transportation going on these two nations, Pakistan and Afghanistan. What is the information you have got on this matter?

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, India has decided to give Afghanistan around 500 million dollars worth of aid from the year 2002 to 2008. We have tried to route it through Pakistan. Except for one time, when 240 buses were allowed to be routed through Pakistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan has not allowed us the right of passage for our aid. We had to have them transferred from India, from our port in Gujarat to the port in Iran and then onwards up to Iran and down to Afghanistan through Herat. The Afghan President was in India. He said that he would take up the matter with the Pakistani authorities. Mr. E. Ahammed went to Afghanistan and he also

talked to him afterwards, he was able to take up the matter with the Pakistani authorities, the answer of the Afghan President was that he had taken up the matter. But, so far, Pakistan has not allowed us to route our aid through Pakistan.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, my second supplementary is this. There is a plan to have a flight between Kabul and Delhi by 31st March. I would like to know what is the plan now in this regard. Are you going to continue with other cities of Afghanistan also? And, in the long run, is there a plan to connect more cities with Delhi?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please go on talking to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, so far, only a route has been established from India to Kabul and *vice-versa.* That is where it stands. Further, nothing has been decided.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, I have listened very carefully to the reply given by the hon. Minister of State. Obviously, there has been no progress with regard to persuading Pakistan either by the Government of Afghanistan or by the Government of India to give us transit faciltiy. What I would like to know, because I recall, Sir, that in this House, I had asked a question of the hon. Prime Minister that when he had met President General Musharraf whether he had taken up the question of transit of Indian goods through Pakistan to Afghanistan and I had been told then that the hon. Prime Minister had indeed taken up that question. Now, Sir, I would like to know whether the Government of India, on its own apart from the effort of the Government of Afghanistan, proposes to take up this issue strongly with Pakistan when President Musharraf comes here over the next few days to watch the cricket match, And, I remember, Sir, in the bad old days, when our relationship with Pakistan was not so good, not so friendly, we had decided to develop the port of chabahaar in Iran for transit throught Iran into Afghanistan, I would like to know from the hon. Minister of State what has been the progress with regard to that. And, 'C part of the question, Sir, if you bear with me for a moment, is that we had offered of Afghanistan to build a Parliament building for them, parliamentary elections have been announced in Afghanistan. I would like to know from the Government of India what has been the progress with regard to the construction of the Parliament building.

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH. Sir, regarding the first question, the President of Pakistan is coming to watch a cricket match. If there is a talk between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan, it would probably be on cricket and not about this. However, India ...*(Interruptions)... however... (Interruptions)...*

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, ...*(Interruptions)...*

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: However, India is always on the effort of trying to ensure that out goods transit through Pakistan to Afghanistan. And, today, Afghanistan has the distinction of receiving the second most amount of aid ever given by India to a country; it has 500 million dollars worth of aid that is being given to them. When it is routed through the seaports and through Iran and then down to Afghanistan, this 500 million dollars worth of aid becomes less and comes down merely to 350 million dollars or 400 million dollars worth of aid. So, we are constantly making an effort to ensure that Pakistan provides us the transit facility. It has not so far fructified. This is number one. Number two was with regard to the Parliament building.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: No, It was regarding the chabahaar Port.

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Okay, the Shahabad Port. Inida has decided to help Iran put up the Shahabad Port. IRCON, Ashok Leyland and RITES have together made a consortium and they are going to make sure that the Shahabad Port becomes a port from where Indian good can transit and it is being done with the Indian help. The third question was whether India was making any contribution towards the Parliament building in Afghanistan. The answer is, Yes'. We are helping them make Parliament building in Afghanistan.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, the relations with Afghanistan have strategic importance. We are very happy to learn that the Government of India is extending all kinds of assistance to them. What I would like to know from the hon. Minister, since the hon. Prime Minister is also in then House, is this. There is another important dimension to the trio of India, Afghanistan and Pakistan and that is drug trafficking. It is on a very large scale from Afghanistan *via* Pakistan to India and also through Pakistan to India. India is not only becoming a transit country but India is also increasingly becoming a drug-user country. Has this matter been taken

up during the discussion with President Karzai and will this be taken up effectively with Pakistan so that we can be saved of this menace?

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, this is a separate question. The issue of drugs is not connected with it.

SHRI LALITSURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, during the regime of Taliban, the great historic 2000-year-old statue of Buddha was destroyed. During the parleys between the Afghanistan Government and the Indian Government, has this matter been taken up to reinstall the statue of Buddha?

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, the Bamiyan Buddhas were on the face of a mountain, made centuries ago. They were destroyed by cannon fire that extended over weeks. It was not destroyed in a day. You cannot make those Bamiyan Buddhas again, but the will and the efforts to make them on a smaller scale are being debated, but nothing has been finalised as yet. But the issue of having some kind of a Buddha statue there in Afghanistan is being taken up actively by the Government of India.

श्री तरलोचन सिंह:सर,ऑन दिस इश्यू। अफगानिस्तान बहुत इम्पोर्टेंट है।

श्री सभापति:आप बैठ जाइए,सभी इम्पोर्टेंट हैं। कोई भी ऐसा क्वेश्चन नहीं है जो इम्पोर्टेंट न हो। नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन 324. श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह मजीठा।

इराक में भारतीय

*324. **श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह मजीठा**: †
श्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद:

क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि अब तक हजारों भारतीय नागरिक इराक पहुंच चुके हैं;
(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि इनमें से अधिकांश श्रमिक वर्ग के लोग हैं;
(ग) यदि हां,तो क्या सरकार ने इराक में उनकी सुरक्षा के लिए कोई प्रबंध किया है, और
(घ) यदि हां,तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

† यह प्रश्न सभा श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह मजीठा द्वारा पूछा गया।